

THRILLING TALES OF HORROR & SUSPENSE

L.M.

JUNE 10¢
NO. 12

DARK MYSTERIES

WEIRD TALES
OF HORROR!

JUST A FEW MORE SHOVELS
OF DIRT AND WE'LL PUT
JACK'S SKELETON
BACK!

OH, NO! THERE'S
JACK BEHIND
YOU!

the HORROR of
the TALKING
DEAD!





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THE LIVING RITA WANTED TO LEARN THE SECRETS OF THE DEAD! HER QUEST LED HER TO THE BRINK OF THE *OTHER WORLD!* AN ANCIENT, EMPTY GRAVE, NOW STRANGELY FILLED WITH THE MORTAL REMAINS OF ONE NEWLY DEAD WAS THE DOOR... SLOWLY SHE CLIMBED IN... SLOWLY...



WHEN OUR STORY BEGINS, RITA WAS STILL ALIVE! ON THE MIDWAY-DANIEL, THE GREAT MIND-READER WAS HER PARTNER AND LOVER. THEIR ACT AMAZED THE CROWDS AND WAS MAKING THEM RICH!

THEIR ACT WAS ALWAYS A SELL OUT...



LITTLE PENNY STORE

YES, THE PEOPLE'S LOVE OF THE MYSTERIOUS KEPT THEM CROWDING IN, BUT OF COURSE IT WAS ALL A TRICK! THEIR ASSISTANTS WOULD FIRST VISIT THE TOWN'S CHURCHES...



AND THEN VISIT THE CEMETERY AND READ THE HEADSTONES!



BUT A NEW, SINISTER ATTRACTION ARRIVED, DRAWING THE CROWDS FROM THE GLOOMY DAN AND RITA! THE MOBS THAT SWARMED NEXT DOOR LOOKED FRIGHTENED, SOMBER... ALMOST ASHAMED!



JEALOUSY AND AMBITION BEGAN TO GNAW INTO THE SOULS OF DAN AND RITA!



NEXT DAY...



AS THE AUDIENCE CALLED OUT NAMES OF THOSE DEAD WHOSE VOICES THEY WISHED TO HEAR, HAMISH WENT INTO A TRANCE... SUDDENLY VOICES ECHOED WEIRDLY! A SHIVER WENT THROUGH THE CROWD...

THE SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY A SOB, OR WEeping, THE CROWD STOLE FROM THE TENT!



DETERMINED TO GET AT THE SECRET OF HAMISH, RITA PLAYED HER GAME!

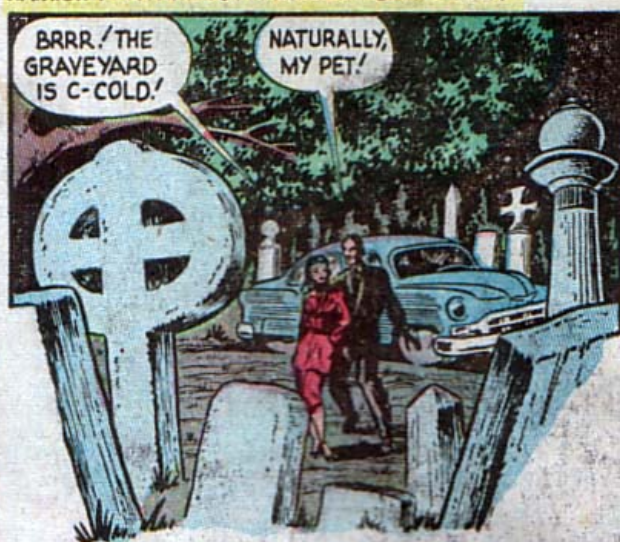
RITA HURRIED OVER TO DAN!



AS RITA WON HAMISH'S PROMISE, SHE FELT HER SKIN SHRIVEL AS HE CRUSHED HER IN AN IRON EMBRACE!



HAMISH TOOK RITA TO AN ANCIENT GRAVEYARD!



HAMISH LOWERED HIMSELF INTO THE OPEN PIT!



THEN RITA, FASCINATED, INCREDULOUS, FRIGHTENED, HEARS HER OWN FATHERS VOICE!





AND, INDEED IT WAS A FANTASTIC, GRUESOME STORY THAT RITA TOLD DAN.



AND THEN A WEEK LATER, RITA FOUND HER WAY!



THE NIGHT HAMISH WAS TO SAIL...

WITH HAMMERING HEART, RITA STARTED TO PUT HER PLAN INTO EFFECT. SHE MUST PLAY IT SMART!



IT'S STILL EARLY! WON'T YOU COME IN, HAMISH!

I'D LOVE TO, DARLING.

I HAVE TO LEAVE NOW, DARLING. I'LL BE SAILING IN A FEW HOURS.

LET'S THINK OF EACH OTHER AFTER YOU LEAVE. I HAVE AN IDEA, HAMISH!



YOU TAKE ONE APPLE, HAMISH. AT MIDNIGHT, TOMORROW, YOU EAT YOURS AT SEA AND I'LL EAT MINE HERE AT THE SAME TIME. THEN WE'LL BOTH BE THINKING OF EACH OTHER!

MY LITTLE ROMANTIC ONE. OF COURSE I'LL EAT MY APPLE!



AU REVOIR, SWEET! WE HAVE A DATE TO THINK OF EACH OTHER TOMORROW! HA HA!

DON'T FORGET TO EAT YOUR APPLE, DARLING!

AS SOON AS HAMISH DEPARTED, RITA RUSHED TO THE PHONE.



DAN, DAN! I THINK OUR PLAN WILL WORK! HE'S GOING TO EAT THE APPLE!



GOOD WORK, SWEETHEART!

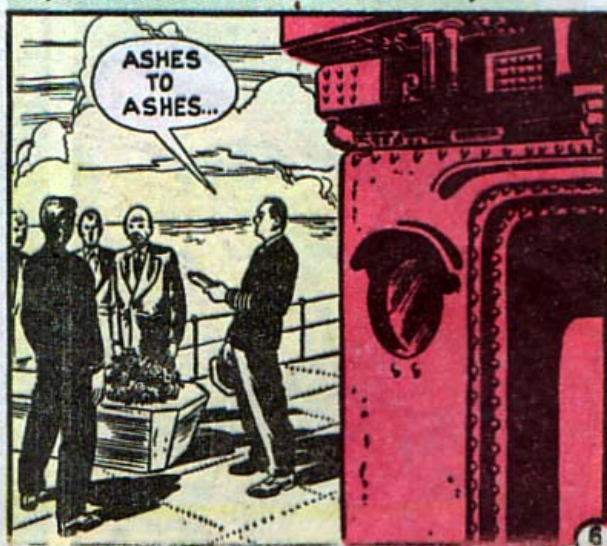
HAMISH DIDN'T KNOW BUT RITA GAVE HIM A DEADLY POISONED APPLE!

MIDNIGHT, THE NEXT DAY...

YES, AT MIDNIGHT THE FOOL ATE HIS APPLE, AND...



IS HAMISH EATING HIS APPLE? HE MUST, HE MUST!



ASHES TO ASHES...



TELEGRAM,
LADY!

I'M COMING!

**KNOCK
KNOCK**

THE GOOD NEWS CAME BY
WIRE: HAMISH WAS DEAD!

SO HAMISH HAD EATEN THE
POISONED APPLE! ONE THOUGHT
OBSESSED RITA, TO RUSH TO THE
CEMETERY TO MAKE HIS GRAVE
TRICK WORK FOR HER!



I MUST
HURRY
BEFORE
IT GETS
LIGHT!

A WILD FORCE DROVE RITA! SHE CLIMBED
INTO THE VAMPIRE'S GRAVE!



R-I-T-A... R-I-T-A...
WE ARE
THE DEAD!

I-HEAR-TH-EM!
THE VOICES-OF-
THE D-E-A-D!

SUDDENLY, RITA SAW A BLACK-
WINGED FIGURE BENDING OVER
HER! SHE RECOGNIZED HIS FACE!



IT-IT'S YOU HAMISH! OH NO!
YOU WERE BURIED AT SEA-
IT CAN'T BE!

A WILD SCREAM PIERCED THE
LONELY GRAVEYARD AS RITA
KNEW SHE WAS TRAPPED IN
THE GRAVE...

YOU DROVE ME BACK TO MY GRAVE! NOW
WE'LL MARRY THE VAMPIRE'S WAY... I'M THE
VAMPIRE! HI SHAM ALSO
SPELLS HAMISH! I WAS
BOTH HISHAM AND HAMISH!



**HELP
ARRRR**



RRR

RITA'S TERRIFIED SCREAMS HAD BEEN HEARD...



THE CRIES CAME FROM THE EMPTY GRAVE...
IT WAS AWFUL, BLOOD-CURDLING...

SHE'S BEEN DRAINED OF
BLOOD! THOSE TWO HOLES
IN HER NECK...

BUT THAT WOULD
MEAN IT MUST HAVE-
BEEN- THE VAMPIRE!



**THE
END!**

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NAME _____

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My age is: _____

YOUR NAME IS ROLAND ADAMS. BY ALL MEASURES YOU SHOULD BE A HAPPY, CONTENTED SOUL, FOR YOU ARE A SCULPTOR UPON WHOM FAME HAS ALREADY CAST HER FICKLE SMILE, AND FOR WHOM FORTUNE WAITS TO EMBRACE IN HER GOLDEN ARMS... IF ONLY YOU CAN LIVE TO COMPLETE FOR YOUR GOOD FRIEND, INSPECTOR HAYES

A MURDERER'S MASK



YOU SEE, ROLAND ADAMS, YOU HAVE A HOBBY...
...A MACABRE AVOCATION... MASKS OF THOSE WHO
HAVE BEEN MURDERED OR EXECUTED...

I'VE ADDED ANOTHER MASK TO
MY COLLECTION, MARY. SOMEDAY
IT'S GOING TO PAY OFF FOR US...
GIVE US THE MONEY TO
MARRY.

OH, ROLAND,
I HATE THEM!
THEY'RE...
REVOLTING!



REVOLTING?... NOT TO YOU, FOR YOU ARE AN ARTIST,
A SPECIALIST WHO SEEKS TO CAPTURE THE ULTIMATE
IN EMOTION.

AH, BUT THESE MASKS ARE
DIFFERENT! LOOK! THEY EACH EXPRESS PAIN,
AND FEAR... THE TERRIBLE MOUNTING FRIGHT OF
ONE WHO KNOWS HE IS ABOUT TO DIE!



AND SO, ROLAND ADAMS, BECAUSE OF THIS STRANGE DESIRE OF YOURS, YOUR LIFE IS CAUGHT UP, ONE WARM SPRING EVENING, IN A WEIRD WEB OF VIOLENCE AND DEATH THAT THE FATES BEGAN TO WEAVE WITH A GIRL IN A PARK... A GIRL ALL ALONE.



IT'S SO LONELY TONIGHT I...

OH! WHAT'S THAT? WHO'S THERE?

NO!
NO!



YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, PRETTY ONE! AS NO ONE EVER DIED BEFORE!

A KILLER IS ABROAD THIS NIGHT, ROLAND ADAMS, A MONSTER WHO WANTS TO SEE THE AGONY OF PAINFUL, CERTAIN DEATH IN THE DISTORTED FEATURES OF HIS VICTIM.

THE FACE OF DEATH! HMMM. UGLY, I'D SAY, YET... BEAUTIFUL IN ITS UGLINESS.



NOR IS HE THROUGH, THAT GRIM AND TERRIBLE SERVANT OF SATAN. ANOTHER NIGHT COMES AND A LATE WORKER HURRIES DOWN A DESERTED STREET... TO AN ABRUPT, BLOODY, END.



A
A
A
RGH!

AND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT THE DEATH LIST GROWS. TERROR IS AN ICY HAND AT THE CITY'S THROAT AND WOMEN FEAR FOR THEIR LOVED ONES.

IT'S LATE, JOHN. YOU'RE NOT GOING OUT NOW, ARE YOU?

DON'T WORRY, MARTHA. I'M JUST PUTTING OUT THE MILK BOTTLE.



YES, JOHN WAS JUST PUTTING OUT THE MILK BOTTLEA STEP ACROSS THE PORCH...



HEY!
WHAT...!

THIS IS DEATH EMBRACING YOU, MY FRIEND. GO AHEAD... SHOW YOUR FRIGHT!

MARTHA...
UUUUGH!



AND WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH YOU, ROLAND ADAMS? WHY, DEATH MASKS ARE YOUR HOBBY. REMEMBER? TO YOU THESE MURDERS HAVE AN IMPORTANCE NOT USUAL TO OTHER PEOPLE.

WELL! ANOTHER BRUTAL KILLING... AND, OF COURSE, ANOTHER MASK FOR ME.



YES, ANOTHER MASK FOR YOU, FOR, FOLLOWING EACH MURDER YOU GO TO YOUR GOOD FRIEND INSPECTOR HAYES OF THE HOMICIDE SQUAD.

I GUESS YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE, INSPECTOR.

I KNOW. YOU WANT PERMISSION TO MAKE ANOTHER DEATH MASK. COME ALONG. I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE MORGUE.



POOR DEVIL! LOOK AT HIS FACE! HE DIED HORRIBLY!



YES, TOO BAD. YOU DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF MURDER... BUT YOUR COLLECTION IS GROWING, ISN'T IT? AND THESE LAST ADDITIONS ARE EXCEPTIONAL.

IN MY THIRTY YEARS ON THE FORCE I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

UH...YES...THE FACE...GHOSTLY!



YOU ARE EAGER TO GET TO WORK, BUT THE INSPECTOR HOLDS YOU... TAKES YOU TO SEE THE CORONER.

I DIDN'T MEAN THE FACE. IT'S HOW THEY WERE KILLED... WITH WHAT KIND OF A WEAPON! THAT'S WHY WE MUST SEE THE CORONER.



AND SO, ROLAND ADAMS, YOU CONTROL YOUR IMPATIENCE. YOU SHOW SOME CURIOSITY... THAT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO, ISN'T IT?

YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T IDENTIFIED THE WEAPON THAT WAS USED IN THESE KILLINGS?

NO. THE WOUNDS ARE SIMILAR, BUT OF AN ODD SHAPE. SOMETIMES, EVEN, A BONE IS CUT RIGHT THROUGH. NOT BROKEN... CUT!





SUDDENLY, YOU, ROLAND ADAMS KNOW HOW YOU CAN CLAIM THE REWARD.

INSPECTOR, LET ME WORK WITH YOU! FROM THE DESCRIPTION YOU GET HERE, I COULD MAKE A MASK OF THE CRIMINAL!

IF ONLY YOU COULD, IT WOULD STOP THESE MURDERS!



THE INSPECTOR AGREES AND YOU MAKE NOTES...

THIS FELLA HAD A HARD FACE... HIS COAT COLLAR WAS TURNED UP, JUST LIKE YOURS.

I THOUGHT HE WAS KINDA

HE WAS KINDA SHORT...



NOW YOU ARE ENGAGED NOT IN MAKING A MASK OF THE KILLED BUT OF THE KILLER...

THEN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR STUDIO AND TRY TO BUILD A FACE OF THE KILLER FROM THE SKETCHY OBSERVATIONS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO FORM THE PICTURE OF THE KILLER.

NO ONE HAS A FULL DESCRIPTION. BUT MY EXPERIENCE WILL HELP ME BUILD THE FACE AND FIND THE WEAPON!



FINALLY, YOU, ROLAND ADAMS, THE SCULPTOR, FALL BACK ON YOUR OWN TALENT AND IMAGINATION...

WITH WHAT I'VE HEARD... WITH WHAT I KNOW, THIS IS THE KILLER FOR INSPECTOR HAYES TO HUNT!



YOU STARE AT WHAT YOU HAVE CREATED... THE FOUL MALEVOLENCE OF THE THING FASCINATES YOU. IT GIVES OFF EVIL LIKE A ROTTEN STENCH! AND YOU ARE STRUCK WITH AN IDEA!

I HAVE NEVER DONE BETTER! BEFORE THE INSPECTOR GETS HERE I MUST DO THIS IN MARBLE... IT WILL BE MY MASTERPIECE!



FURIOUSLY, YOU ATTACK THE MARBLE BLOCK. THE CHIPS FALL AND A FACE OF DEATH TAKES SHAPE BENEATH YOUR FRANTIC ATTACK.

NOW IF I ONLY KNEW THE WEAPON...



THEN, AS YOU NEAR COMPLETION, YOU STRIKE A CARELESS, POORLY AIMED BLOW.

DRAT! I BROKE MY CHISEL. I'LL HAVE TO GET ANOTHER BECAUSE I WANT TO FINISH THIS BEFORE THE INSPECTOR ARRIVES.



THERE IS AN ART STORE NEARBY. YOU HAVE NEVER PATRONIZED IT MUCH, BUT THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

I NEED A NUMBER 7 CHISEL WITH A CURVED CUT. COULD YOU SEND IT UP, PLEASE?

I'M ALONE IN THE SHOP NOW. CAN YOU WAIT?



NO! NO! I MUST HAVE THE CHISEL AT ONCE! I'M DOING A BUST OF THE KILLER WHO'S BEEN TERRORIZING THE CITY. I MUST FINISH IT SO I CAN WORK ON THE WEAPON!

YOU... YOU KNOW WHAT THE KILLER LOOKS LIKE?



YES / EXACTLY! NOW WILL YOU PLEASE HURRY?

OF COURSE! I'LL CLOSE UP THE SHOP. I'LL BRING THE CHISEL MYSELF.



WAS THERE AN OMINOUS NOTE IN THOSE LAST WORDS, ROLAND ADAMS? IF THERE WAS YOU DIDN'T NOTICE IT ... YOU WERE TOO ABSORBED IN YOUR HANDIWORK ... YES, TOO ABSORBED TO EVEN HEAR THE DOOR OPEN, OR HEAR THE ART STORE MAN WALK IN ...

YOU... WANTED... A ... CHISEL ... MY ... FRIEND?

HUH? ...ER, YES...



THEN ROLAND SAW THE APPROACHING FIGURE AND THE BUST WERE ALIKE!

THEN, YOU SHALL HAVE IT, MY FRIEND!

YOU... THE KILLER! AND YOUR WEAPON... A SCULPTOR'S CHISEL...



I... I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... AAAAGH!



AH, YES, ROLAND ADAMS, YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN/ TOO BAD, THE TOOL WHICH BROUGHT YOU DEATH MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT YOU FORTUNE/ FAME TOO... BUT WHO KNOWS, MAYBE SOMEBODY WILL MAKE A DEATH MASK OF YOU!

The End

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THE PRINTED WORD CONJURES UP EXCITING SCENES IN THE READERS MIND/THERE ARE OTHERS WHO CLAIM THE PRINTED BOOK CAN GIVE LIFE TO ITS CHARACTERS...IF VIVIDLY WRITTEN...BUT DAVID MURDOCK FOUND ONLY APPARITIONS OF HORROR IN THE DEATH-SHADOWED PAGES OF HIS STOLEN

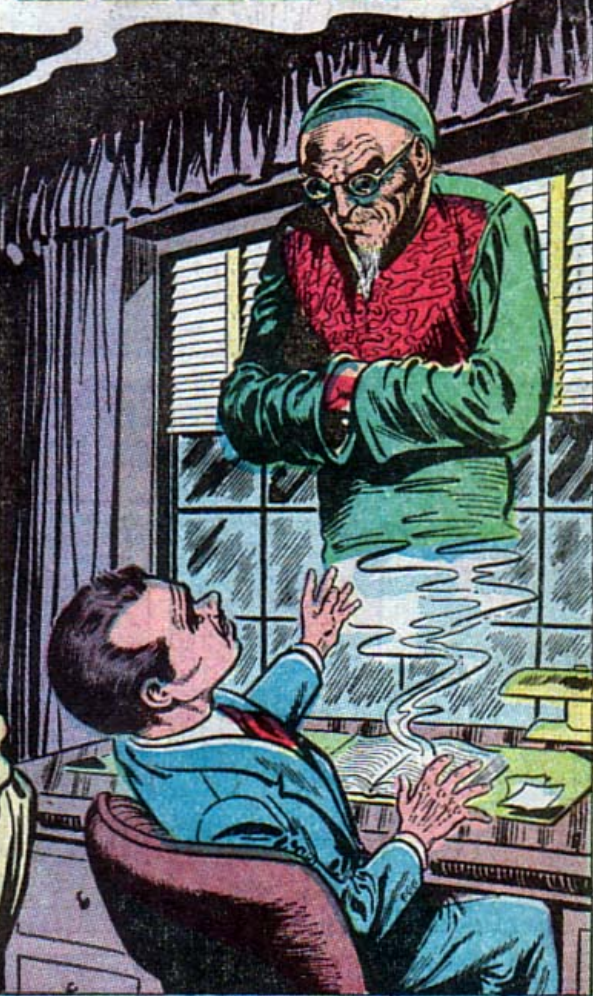
BEST SELLER!



DAVID'S AMBITION WAS TO BE A SUCCESSFUL WRITER... BUT YEARS OF HEART-BREAKING TOIL HAD EARNED HIM...

REJECTION SLIPS/ONLY REJECTION SLIPS!

ANOTHER REJECTION SLIP! THAT'S THE LAST STRAW, DAVID! WHY CAN'T YOU WRITE ANYTHING THAT SELLS... I'M FED UP!



I DO MY BEST, JANE!

YES, BUT NOBODY BUYS IT! BERT DEVLIN NEVER GETS REJECTION SLIPS/HE SELLS EVERYTHING HE WRITES! WHY CAN'T YOU BE LIKE HIM!?



BERT AGAIN! YOU'RE ALWAYS THROWING HIM UP TO ME! HE'S JUST A LUCKY HACK! I CAN'T WRITE THE TRASH HE SELLS!

AT LEAST HE MAKES MONEY! YOU'RE A FLOP! MAYBE YOU LIKE STARVING, BUT NOT ME!



DARLING! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE. I'LL...

I'M THROUGH, DAVE! LOOK ME UP WHEN YOU'RE AS SUCCESSFUL AS BERT DEVLIN! GOODBYE!

DAVID WAS STUNG TO THE QUICK. A FEW NIGHTS LATER HE SWALLOWED HIS PRIDE AND



I'LL GO SEE BERT! HE'S MY BEST FRIEND! HE'LL HELP ME WRITE SOMETHING THAT SELLS!

AS DAVID APPROACHED BERT'S APARTMENT HOUSE...



THERE'S BERT! AND JANE! MY BEST FRIEND, HUH! I'LL KILL HIM FOR THIS! JANE IS MY GIRL!

DAVID MAADENED BEYOND ALL REASON, HAD A WILD PLAN. HE GRABBED A TAXI AND DECIDED TO VISIT HIS FRIEND, DR. WONG, IN CHINATOWN.



WILSON AND BROAD! HURRY!

YES SIR!



WELCOME, DAVID MURDOCK!

MY HAPPINESS IS BEING RUINED! I NEED YOUR HELP, DR. WONG!

DAVID SHRANK BACK AS THE SINISTER DR. WONG SHUFFLED TOWARD HIM...



YOU HAVE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE FOR HELP!



YOU ENVY YOUR FRIEND BERT DEVLIN! HE HAS THE SUCCESS YOU DESIRE! AND NOW HE HAS JANE! THE GIRL YOU LOVE!

THIS IS INCREDIBLE! HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE THINGS? IF YOU KNOW SO MUCH, THEN TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO? I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING BUT...



...BUT MURDER? IS THAT WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND?

IT'S UNCANNY! YOU'RE READING MY MIND! I ONLY THOUGHT...



YOU ONLY THOUGHT TO TAKE BERTS PLACE IN LIFE! TO TAKE HIS FINISHED NOVEL FOR YOUR OWN... AND WIN BACK JANE! WHAT IS IT WORTH TO YOU TO DO THIS?

TELL ME HOW AND I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT!

DOCTOR WONG LED DAVID TO THE BACK OF THE SHOP, AND...



HERE ON THIS SHELF OF FATAL POTIONS IS YOUR ANSWER! DO AS I SAY AND HE'LL DIE IN AGONY!

BUT I HAVE NO MONEY! I CAN'T PAY YOU!



THEN YOU MUST WRITE ME INTO THE BOOK! YOU MUST DESCRIBE ME WELL, AND I MUST HAVE HALF OF ALL YOUR PROFITS! DO NOT TRY TO CHEAT ME!

I PROMISE!

THE NEXT MORNING, DAVID CALLED ON BERT...



WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT SO EARLY IN THE DAY?

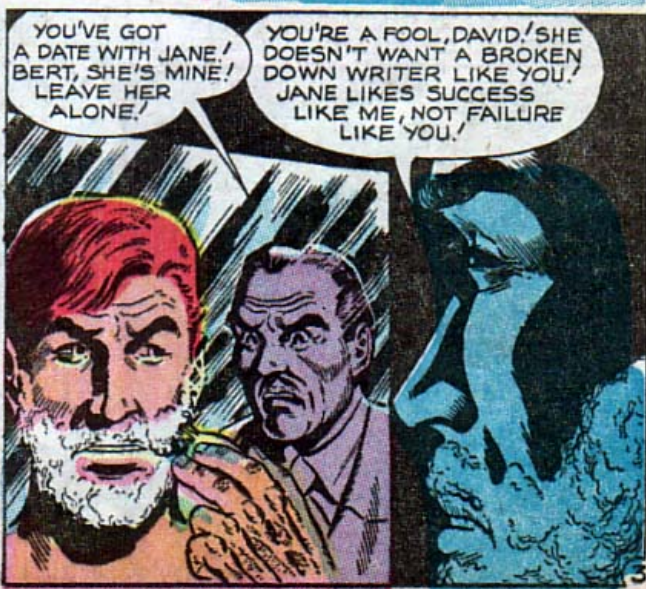
THERE, I'VE INJECTED THE LOCKJAW VIRUS IN HIS SHAVING CREAM!

I-I NEED HELP, BERT, ON MY NEW MANUSCRIPT!



I WANT TO BE A SUCCESS LIKE YOU, BERT! GIVE ME SOME ADVICE! TEACH ME TO WRITE... LIKE YOU!

THAT'S MY NEW NOVEL, BUT I CAN'T HELP YOU NOW! I'VE GOT TO SHAVE AND KEEP A LUNCH DATE!



YOU'VE GOT A DATE WITH JANE! BERT, SHE'S MINE! LEAVE HER ALONE!

YOU'RE A FOOL, DAVID! SHE DOESN'T WANT A BROKEN DOWN WRITER LIKE YOU! JANE LIKES SUCCESS LIKE ME, NOT FAILURE LIKE YOU!

ENRAGED, DAVID GRABBED BERT AND...



YOU RAT! I'LL...

OUCH, YOU CLUMSY OX! YOU MADE ME CUT MYSELF! NOW GET OUT OF HERE AND LET ME ALONE!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, BERT STUMBLED OUT INTO HIS SWANK LIVING ROOM...



I'LL GET OUT, BERT! I HAVE WHAT I CAME FOR! THIS! YOUR FINISHED MANUSCRIPT!

YOU'RE CRAZY! YOU CAN'T TAKE... FEEL SO STRANGE! CAN'T TALK... MMMFFF!!

AND SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR, A DYING MAN...



YOU CAN'T STOP ME! NEVER AGAIN! FROM NOW ON, I'M GOING TO BE THE SUCCESSFUL ONE! AND YOU'LL BE DEAD!

DAVID WORKED HARD KEEPING THE FIRST PART OF HIS BARGAIN! HE FINISHED THE STOLEN MANUSCRIPT... AND PUT WONG INTO ITS STORY!



THAT WAS A STRANGE REQUEST OF WONG'S! TO BE WRITTEN INTO THE BOOK! WELL, I'VE DONE IT! IT EVEN IMPROVES THE BOOK!

WEEKS PASSED... AND THEN ONE DAY DAVID WAS CALLED TO THE OFFICE OF ALAX PUBLICATIONS...



I LIKE YOUR BOOK, MURDOCK! GOT THE MAKINGS OF A BEST SELLER! WE'RE GOING TO PRINT IT! HERE'S YOUR ADVANCE!

TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS! THANK YOU, SIR!

BUT MONEY MADE DAVID "FORGET" THE SECOND PART OF HIS BARGAIN WITH WONG!



I'M A SUCCESS AT LAST! I'D BE A FOOL TO GIVE WONG ANY OF THIS MONEY! HE'LL NEVER KNOW, BUT I'LL MAKE SURE!

ALAX PUBLICATIONS

THAT NIGHT, DAVID VISITED WONG!



YOU HAVE COME TO PAY ME HALF OF YOUR ADVANCE, DAVID!

HOW DID YOU KNOW... YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, YOU OLD DEVIL! WHY SHOULD I PAY YOU? I KILLED BERT! WHAT DID YOU DO?



I SHOWED YOU THE WAY AND YOU AGREED TO GIVE ME HALF THE PROFITS!

BUT THIS IS MY MONEY! MORE MONEY THAN I'VE EVER HAD! I CAN'T GIVE IT TO YOU! IT'S MINE!



DON'T BE A FOOL! PAY ME DAVID! NO ONE CHEATS DR. WONG!



YOU AGREED! YOU MADE A BARGAIN!

IN A FEW MOMENTS, DAVID SILENCED THE SCREECHING VOICE THAT DEMANDED A SHARE OF HIS SUCCESS...



I'LL GET PAID... AAAAGGHH!

WEEKS LATER DAVID REVELED IN HIS STOLEN LUXURY...



THIS IS THE LIFE! A SWELL PENTHOUSE! NEW CLOTHES, AND NOW YOU'VE PROMISED TO MARRY ME JANE!

YOU'VE MADE ME SO HAPPY!



THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! I'LL GET DRESSED AND WE'LL DO THE TOWN! CARE TO LOOK OVER MY NOVEL THE WHILE?

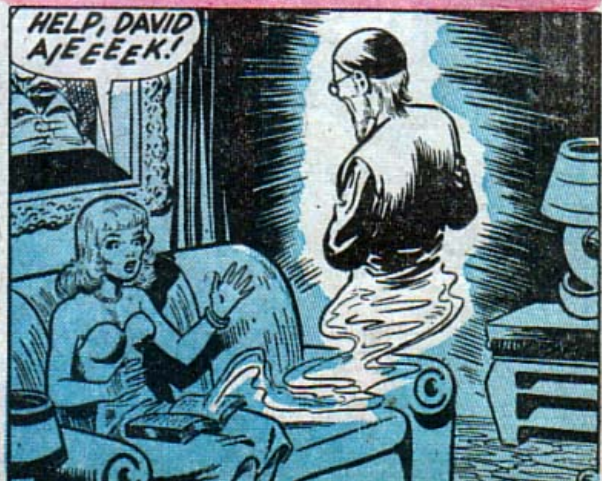
WONDERFUL IDEA! HURRY UP AND GET READY AND I'LL READ A LITTLE! I'M DYING TO SEE WHAT YOU SOLD!



HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, HONEY?

TERRIFIC, DAVID! WHERE DID YOU EVER DREAM UP THIS HORRIBLE DOCTOR WONG CHARACTER! HE'S SO GRUESOME HE FRIGHTENS ME!

AS JANE READ ABOUT WONG, THE ROOM FILLED WITH A MURKY EVIL SMELLING CLOUD! SUDDENLY, FROM THE PRINTED PAGE SPRANG AN ORIENTAL FIGURE...



HELP, DAVID AIEEEK!

AS JANE SCREAM RENT THE AIR, DAVID SPRANG INTO THE ROOM TO SEE...



THE LAMP OF DOOM

By LESLIE MASON

IT WAS OVER 90, down in the mine pit. The two men swinging their picks were stripped to the waist, their grimy torsos gleaming like burnished copper under the pouring sweat.

Nick stopped to mop his face. Leaning on the handle of his axe he stared fixedly at the back of his co-worker who was swinging up and over rhythmically in a perfect arc. "Ping," rang through the pit every time the steel struck the rock wall.

Suddenly the moving arms froze, the arc uncompleted. It was as though those boring eyes of Nick were penetrating the wet flesh. Despite the terrific heat, the body shuddered and the man turned sharply around, looking with terror into the eyes of Nick.

"Wh—why—ya looking at me like that, Nick?" the young man asked, his voice shaking.

"Jus wondrin, Andy, what Mabel sees in ya," Nick replied, his eyes still boring.

A dark glaze of fear covered Andy's pupils. The lamp on his forehead flickered brightly.

"That's a mighty handsome lamp Mabel give ya," sneered Nick. "Pretty fancy with all that chrome. Funny, when she went steady with me she never gave me nothin'."

"Why ya still stewin' over Mabel, Nick?" Andy's voice was almost pleading. "She said she never promised you nuthin. You two were never engaged."

"So that's what she tole ya! The lyin' she-devill!" Nick's teeth were bared as jealous rage fired his blood.

Forgetting his fear of the enraged Nick, Andy automatically darted forward with clenched fist. But Nick leaped aside, grabbed Andy's pick and lunged the curved steel into the heart of the oncoming man. With a low moan, Andy toppled over, dead.

Nick stood over the corpse of his rival, a sneer on his lips. "You snake—I got ya putta my way at last. An don't worry—I won't take the rap, either. It's gonna be an accident."

When he had arranged Andy's body so that it looked as though he had tripped and fallen on the upturned pick-axe, Nick began to yell. His voice echoing and re-echoing through the black vaults brought a stream of miners from the inner recesses. It was easy, telling them about the terrible accident to his friend, Andy. Everyone knew they had been buddies. An awful thing to see your own pal trip and fall on his own pick! Sympathetic pats on his bent back brought an amused smile on Nick's lowered face—What saps they werel They didn't even realize he had killed Andy cause he had stolen his girl—and now he was going to get her back again.

* * *

Ping! Ping! Ping! Ping! the singing axe rang out in quick, ringing strokes. Nick's muscles moved smoothly under the shiny, wet skin. A new confidence filled him with well-being. He removed his cap with the miner's lamp fastened to it and wiped his grimy brow. The lamp glowed with a dim light and Nick fussed with the wick. His fingers patted the chromium trim and he snickered out loud in the empty pit. So, now the lamp was his! And he was back in the pit where he and Andy had worked together. They were short-handed, but they promised him another man in a few days.

Well, his first day back, after spending a week mourning his dead buddy, Andy, it was good to be alone. Kinda look around and get used to being back. Better to be alone—just in case a ghost should be hoverin' around. Hahaha! Ghosts! Anyway, Andy's ghost had no power against him. Things had turned out too well. Why, after Mabel got used to the idea that Andy was dead, she even let him come to see her.

One look at her and he knew things had not changed for him. She still could make his head reel when she turned her large brown eyes, like velvet, on him. He had been a fool to let her go. If he hadn't played around with that dancer, Flora, Mabel wouldn't have turned to Andy. But how was he to know she'd find out! Well, with Andy out of the way, he'd win her again—but this time he'd play it more careful.

The first time he called, she was very quiet. She was dressed in black and sat pulling at a little handkerchief in her lap. She asked him a lot of questions about Andy's accident. Sometimes he had to squirm. She was worse than a detective. Lucky the police had cleared him and called it an accident. It was creepy, too, the way she kept the lamp she had given Andy close to her on the sofa. Every now and then her fingers would creep out and fondle the thing.

But she let him come back. And it was just last night that she had asked him to take Andy's lamp.

"You were his friend, Nick. I'd like you to use this lamp in the pit."

"But—you seem to like it, Mabel," Nick answered uncertainly. "Don't you want to keep it as a—souvenir?"

"No," she said firmly, "I now want you to have it. Will you take it with you to the pit tomorrow? Promise!"

So that's how he came to have Andy's lamp. Mabel had gotten over her boy-friend's death quickly and had pressed her own gift to Andy on him, Nick. After all she once loved him—before Andy—it wouldn't be hard, again. What—what was that?

A distant rumble became a crash. Nick jumped up in time to escape falling rock. Then it happened. Suddenly there was pitch blackness—the darn safety lamp had gone out. But how. Then the noise stopped. Groping, he felt his way along the walls of the pit. His hand touched water! A leakage in the vein! He must get out, find the automatic safety door.

He started to scream. All the men were running

to the safety door. Frantically, he groped in the blackness. He fell to his knees and gasped as water came up to his hips. The water was coming through the vein in streams and fast filling the pit. He could hear the other men shouting to him to get to the safety door before they would spring it shut. They just didn't understand that his lamp went out. A miner's lamp never goes out! It's his most vital tool. This lamp—it was Andy's—Mabel made him take it—why did it go out?

Suddenly there was silence—except for the gushing water. The men's voices stopped. Seeing no light they assumed everyone had gotten out. A terrible clang rang out. My God—they had sprung the safety door! They thought he had gotten out, too! He tried to yell, to tell them he was in blackness, the lamp—the lamp—was out—But the heavy door which kept the water from overflowing into the other pits also shut in the sound of his voice. As the water rose higher and higher, up to his chest, his chin, he knew he was doomed.

When the miners reached the surface, the glare of sunlight smarting their eyes, a girl was standing, waiting, waiting. It was Mabel.

"Where's—where's—Nick?" she asked, an odd smile playing on her lips.

Nick wasn't with them. When the final load reached the top—he wasn't there. A rescue party was formed to go back for him.

"We thought he got out—why didn't he come when the leak started?" they all wondered.

The rescue party worked all night. Early the next morning they were able to raise the safety door. The body of Nick was found—and there was the lamp, Andy's lamp, which Mabel had given him. But it was brightly glowing.

He could have gotten out in plenty of time. The lamp shed plenty of light. Why didn't he make his escape?

They all wondered. But, still on Mabel's lips, was that enigmatic smile.

THE END

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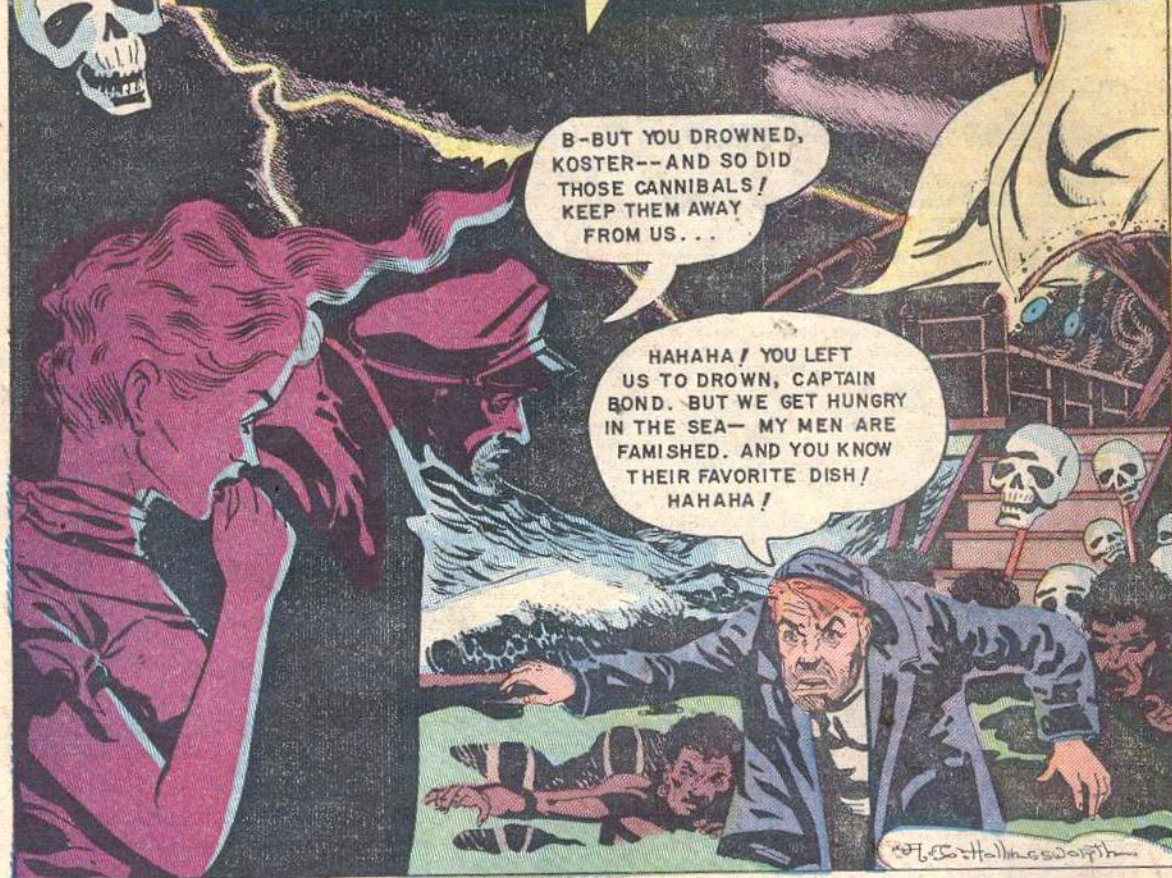
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A LAND OF MYSTERY IS OLD AFRICA, OF WILD, SAVAGE, PEOPLE --- TRIBES OF MAN-EATING CANNIBALS. SPELLS AND MAGIC ARE COMMON --- STRANGE EVENTS TAKE PLACE THAT CAN NEVER BE EXPLAINED. HERE A MAN DISCOVERED ANOTHER'S DEATH HAD GIVEN HIM A NEW AND WONDROUS POWER: TO MAKE WISHES THAT WOULD COME TRUE / BUT HIS LAST WISH --- WAS ---

The WISH of DOOM



BOND, THE TOUGH CAPTAIN OF THE FREIGHTER, "SEA LION" PLIED HIS TRADE IN DEEPEST AFRICA AND HE LOVED IT. BUT HIS CREW HATED HIM AND FREQUENTLY DESERTED...

AVAST, KOSTER, WE'RE MAKING TOWARD PORT. WE'LL NEED MORE HANDS TO REPLACE THE DESERTERS!

AYE, AYE, CAP'N BOND. BUT THEY'RE ALL CANNIBALS IN KANGYIKA.

CANNIBALS DON'T SCARE ME -- YOUR PEOPLE WERE VOODOO WORSHIPPERS, TOO!

I'LL DELIVER THE CANNIBALS!

MATE KOSTER DELIVERED THE NEW CREW...

WE CAN HANDLE 'EM, MATE. CANNIBALS OR NOT -- WE NEED 'EM!

DRIVE 'EM ON!



BEFORE BOND COULD SAIL, A PASSENGER APPROACHED...

MY NAME IS MARCIA RAND. I BEG OF YOU TO TAKE ME AS A PASSENGER. I MUST GET AWAY FROM THE CANNIBALS?

SORRY, MA'AM, IMPOSSIBLE. OUR CREW IS MOSTLY OF A CANNIBAL TRIBE.

DON'T TAKE A DAME, CAP'N / CANNIBALS AND DAMES DON'T MIX /

BUT THE TEMPTATION OF A BEAUTIFUL GIRL AND A FORTUNE IN JEWELS WAS TOO MUCH FOR CAPTAIN BOND TO RESIST.

SEE THESE CANNIBAL JEWELS? THEY ARE ALL YOURS IF YOU TAKE ME.

IT'S A DEAL--BUT I'VE WARNED YOU--THERE'S DANGER.

CAPTAIN BOND AND MARCIA FIND THE TRIP MOST AGREEABLE, BUT FIRST MATE, JOE KOSTER, RESENTS A GIRL-PASSENGER ON BOARD.

I'M AWFULLY GRATEFUL, CAPTAIN BOND-- I MEAN, CLIFF /

YOU PAID ME WELL, MARCIA. BESIDES, I LIKE YOU-- A LOT.

SO I'LL ASK NO QUESTIONS!

A DAME-- ON A SHIP / SHE'S HARD LUCK / THE CAP'N'S LOCO!

THAT NIGHT...

WHAT WAS THAT? MARCIA! SHE'S CALLING ME!

H---HELP! CL--CLIFF!

DEVIL TAKE YA-- YA CANNIBAL!

OOOOOH!

OH, CLIFF, YOU CAME JUST IN TIME-- THAT AWFUL BEAST...

SHE HARD LUCK, CAP'N. SHE STOLE JEWELS?

THE NEXT AFTERNOON BROUGHT AN AFRICAN HURRICANE AND A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND TORE AT THE MAST AND AN EAR-SPLITTING BURST OF THUNDER BROKE THE TROPICAL QUIET.

MATE KOSTER, ORDER MAINSAILS LOWERED!

C'MON, BOY-- YOU HEARD THE ORDERS!



THE OLD FREIGHTER WAS CRACKING APART UNDER THE LASHING OF THE STORM. TWO LIFE-BOATS WERE LOST AND ONLY THE THIRD AND LAST WAS LEFT...

GET IN THAT LIFEBOAT, WITH THE JEWELS, MARCIA?

CR-- CRASH!



THE SEA LION WAS BREAKING UP FAST. BUT CLIFF AND MARCIA DIDN'T WAIT FOR THE FIRST MATE AND THE REST OF THE CREW...

THE SHIP'S SINKING/ EACH MAN FOR HIMSELF/ WE CAN'T TAKE CANNIBALS, KOSTER!

WAIT FOR US/ DON'T DESERT YOUR SHIP... OR YOU'LL BE A FLYING DUTCHMAN!



CURSE YOU BOTH/ MAY ALL YOUR WISHES COME TRUE AND YOUR LIVES PRESERVED SO THAT WE CAN MEET AGAIN!



CLIFF AND HIS LOVE WERE SAVED... TOGETHER THEY LEFT THE FREIGHTER TO SINK WITH KOSTER AND THE SAVAGES ON BOARD.

SORRY, KOSTER, YOU WASTED YOUR LAST BREATH. WE'LL NEVER MEET AGAIN.

THEY WERE A BUNCH OF SAVAGES, ANYWAY. BUT WHO IS THE FLYING DUTCHMAN?



FINALLY THE ANGRY SEA SUBSIDED AND BOND TOLD THE STORY OF THE FLYING DUTCHMAN...

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN DESERTED HIS SHIP AND CAN'T DIE BUT MUST ROAM THE SEA FOREVER CURSED!

SOUNDS LIKE A CANNIBALS FAIRY TALE!



THE CALM THAT FOLLOWED THE STORM WAS HOT AND HUMID. CLIFF AND MARCIA HAD NOW BEEN DRIFTING FOR THREE DAYS.

I- I'M SO HUNGRY, CLIFF.

ME, TOO. I- I WISH I COULD FIND SOME FOOD...



CLIFF HAD HARDLY UTTERED THESE WORDS WHEN A BIRD PERCHED ON THE BOAT...

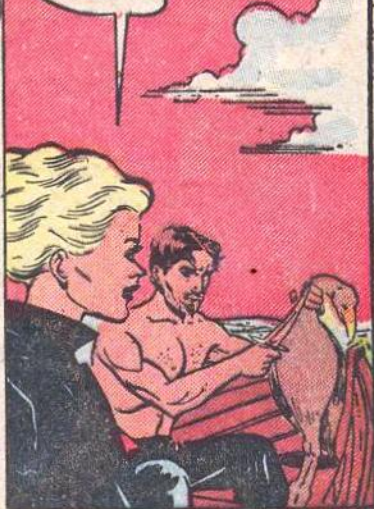
CLIFF- LOOK- LOOK /

THAT'S OUR MEAL, MARCIA.



BOND CAPTURED AND KILLED THE BIRD...

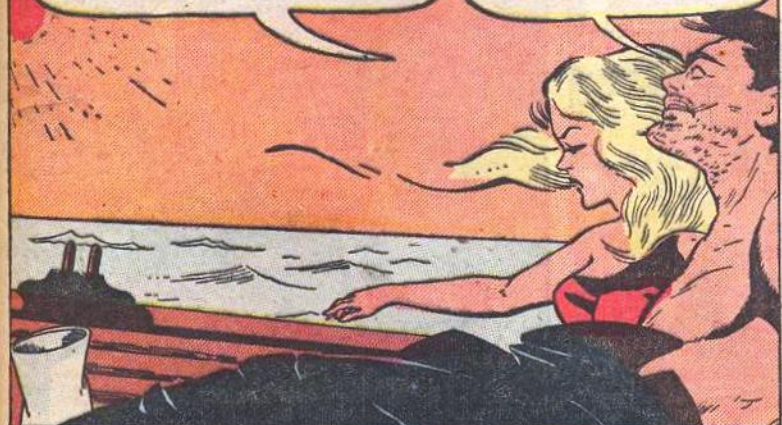
YOUR WISH CAME TRUE.



SOON, CLIFF AND MARCIA DEVELOPED AN UNBEARABLE THIRST- BUT WOULD NOT DARE DRINK THE SALTY WATER OF THE SEA...

THIS IS WORSE THAN HUNGER, CLIFF. MY- TONGUE- I- NEED- WATER...

THIS THIRST IS TERRIBLE. I WISH IT WOULD RAIN...



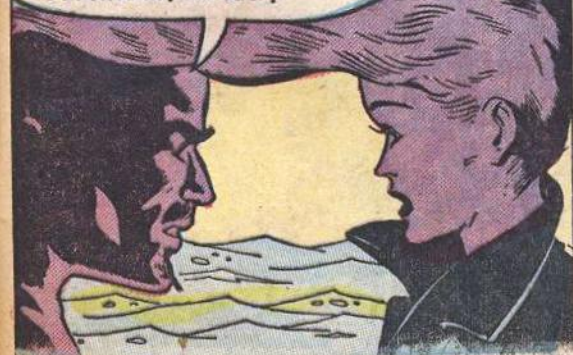
SUDDENLY, AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS WISH, THE SKY DARKENED... DROPS OF RAIN FELL, MAGICALLY!

THAT TIN CAN- I'LL CATCH SOME WATER!



YOUR WISHES ALL CAME TRUE / MAYBE IT'S KOSTER'S CURSE. I'M AFRAID, CLIFF!

NOT ME. I'LL MAKE ANOTHER WISH-- THAT WE GET RESCUED-- EVEN IF IT'S BY THE OLD FLYING DUTCHMAN, HIMSELF!

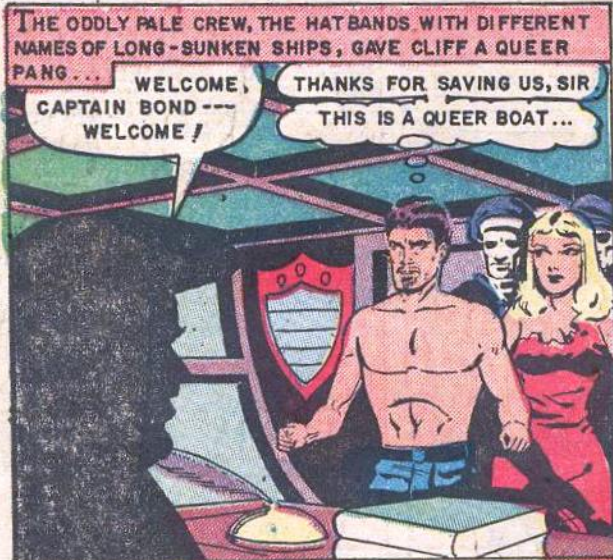
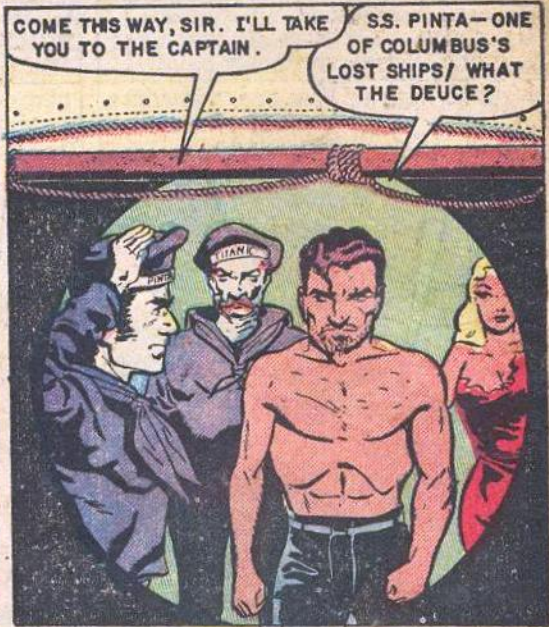
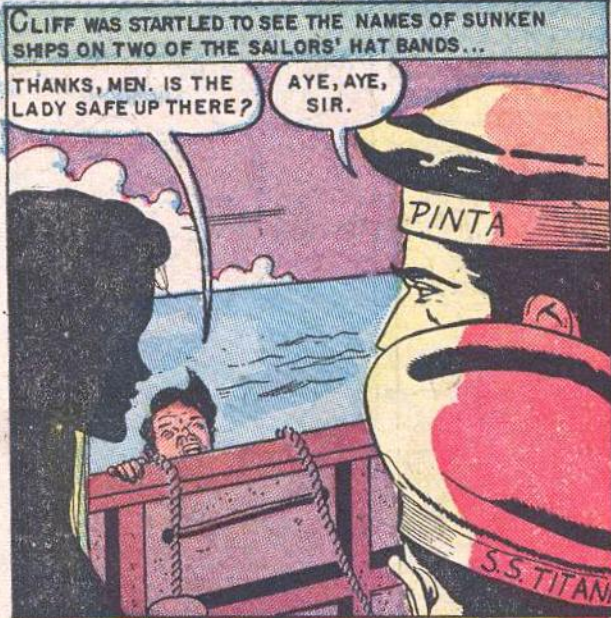


AND THEN, AGAIN, CLIFF'S WISH WAS ANSWERED. A SHIP APPEARED...

CLIFF- THERE'S A SAIL!

KOSTER'S CURSE BROUGHT US LUCK! I'LL MAKE A LOT OF WISHES/ WE'LL BE RICH/ AHoy THERE!







BOND HAD A PLAN...

WE'LL OBEY YOU, CAPTAIN...
JUST RELEASE US!



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THEY SAW THEIR
CHANCE...

D'YA HAVE THE
KNIFE, CLIFF?

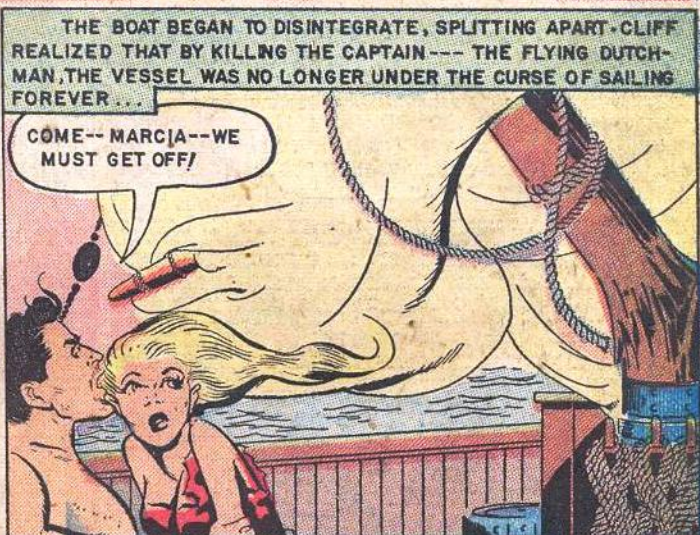
SH--SH? I WISH MY
PLAN WORKS?



I'LL DUMP YOU OVERBOARD--AND THE
SHIP'S MINE-- WH-- WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

ARRRRGH!

RRR--RUMBLE--
GR--GROAN--
CR--CRASH.



THE BOAT BEGAN TO DISINTEGRATE, SPLITTING APART. CLIFF
REALIZED THAT BY KILLING THE CAPTAIN--- THE FLYING DUTCH-
MAN, THE VESSEL WAS NO LONGER UNDER THE CURSE OF SAILING
FOREVER...

COME-- MARCIA--WE
MUST GET OFF!



HOLD MY HAND,
CLIFF!



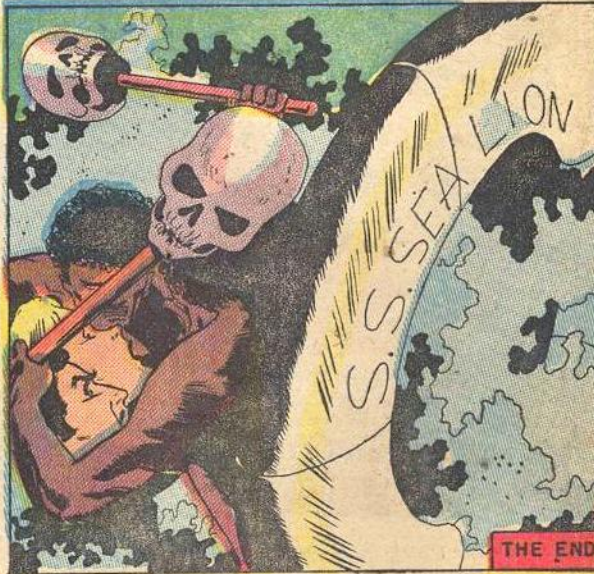
GRAB HOLD OF THIS PIECE OF
TIMBER, MARCIA!



I GOT IT, CLIFF. OH, CLIFF,
QUICK, MAKE A WISH!



IN AFRICA
THERE IS
SORCERY AND
WITCHCRAFT—
AND CURSES
THAT HIT
THEIR MARK.
SO CAPTAIN
CLIFF BOND
AND THE
GIRL, MARCIA,
FOUND OUT.
THEY
BECAME
FOOD —
FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
DIDN'T
THEY?



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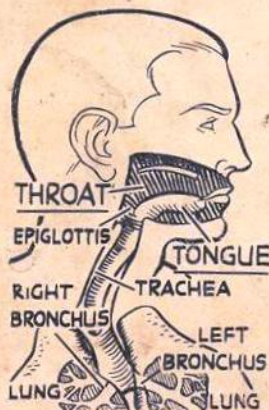
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